
SENATE BILL 5478

State of Washington

64th Legislature

2015 Regular Session

By Senators Dammeier, Keiser, Honeyford, Angel, and Conway

Read first time 01/22/15. Referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

1 AN ACT Relating to financing facilities to support education
2 reform; adding a new section to chapter 28A.188 RCW; adding a new
3 section to chapter 28A.150 RCW; creating a new section; and declaring
4 an emergency.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that local
7 school districts design, build, own, and manage public school
8 facilities. School districts are assisted in providing public school
9 facilities primarily through the school construction assistance grant
10 program specified in chapter 28A.525 RCW. This grant program provides
11 financial assistance for new school capacity to accommodate
12 enrollment growth and for the modernization and replacement of
13 existing schools while respecting local decisions and control by
14 locally elected school boards.

15 (2) The legislature also finds that some school districts may
16 benefit from additional assistance to provide school facilities
17 beyond that which is provided through the school construction
18 assistance grant program.

19 (3) The legislature intends to provide additional financial
20 assistance to school districts for modernization of their facilities
21 that support science, technology, engineering and mathematics

1 education, and may be helpful to expand state-funded all-day
2 kindergarten.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.188
4 RCW to read as follows:

5 (1) The legislature recognizes that to achieve improvements in
6 science, technology, engineering, and mathematics literacy
7 specialized school plant facilities are required. Adequate STEM
8 facilities support interactive, project-based STEM curricula and
9 support STEM teachers who are attempting to deliver interactive,
10 project-based STEM curricula. The legislature also recognizes that to
11 achieve expected improvements in STEM literacy the development and
12 modernization of specialized STEM facilities must occur at a faster
13 pace than the typical thirty to fifty-year cycle of modernizing or
14 replacing school plant facilities. The legislature intends to speed
15 up the development and modernization of specialized STEM facilities
16 through the grant program described in this section.

17 (2) The specialized STEM facility grant program must be
18 administered by the superintendent of public instruction in
19 consultation with the STEM education innovation alliance specified in
20 RCW 28A.188.030 and the statewide STEM organization specified in RCW
21 28A.188.050. The superintendent of public instruction must develop
22 grant application materials in consultation with the statewide STEM
23 organization, must review applications for accuracy and financial
24 reasonableness, and must administer awarded grants. With funds
25 specifically appropriated for this purpose, the superintendent of
26 public instruction must contract with the statewide STEM organization
27 specified in RCW 28A.188.050 to evaluate applications against the
28 criteria specified in subsection (4) of this section and recommend a
29 single rank-ordered list of grant applications. The superintendent of
30 public instruction may modify the rank-ordered list received by the
31 statewide STEM organization for inclusion in the office's capital
32 budget request, but must also submit to the governor and fiscal
33 committees of the legislature the original ranking by the statewide
34 STEM organization with explanations for any changes made to the
35 ranking. The governor may use the original list prepared by the
36 statewide STEM organization or may consider any changes recommended
37 by the office of the superintendent of public instruction in
38 preparing the governor's capital budget request.

1 (3) One hundred percent of project costs are eligible for grants
2 under this program for:

3 (a) Facilities owned by public school districts or public charter
4 schools used for grades nine through twelve;

5 (b) Facilities built or modernized more than ten years prior to
6 the grant application; and

7 (c) Project costs for design, construction, project management,
8 capitalized and noncapitalized equipment and fixtures, and necessary
9 utility, educational technology infrastructure, and information
10 technology systems upgrades to support the specialized STEM
11 facilities.

12 (4) The criteria listed in this subsection must be used to rank
13 grant requests. In applying these criteria, the statewide STEM
14 organization should seek to recommend funding for projects that
15 modernize the most inadequate facilities, to be used by the most
16 qualified STEM teachers, expected to result in the greatest gains in
17 STEM literacy for the greatest number of students for the aggregate
18 amount of proposed grant funding, while improving specialized STEM
19 facilities in rural, suburban, and urban districts in all parts of
20 the state. The criteria are:

21 (a) The extent that existing STEM facilities are inadequate
22 including the lack of adequate STEM facilities to meet graduation
23 requirements in RCW 28A.150.220;

24 (b) A demonstration that existing STEM faculty are in place and
25 are qualified to deliver an interactive, project-based STEM
26 curriculum in the proposed specialized STEM facilities, or a plan and
27 budget are in place to recruit or train such STEM faculty;

28 (c) The expected gains in STEM literacy that are expected from
29 the proposed specialized STEM facilities in comparison to the
30 proposed project costs;

31 (d) The STEM facilities are needed in schools with the highest
32 free and reduced-price school lunch enrollment percentages;

33 (e) A broad distribution of grants across the state benefiting
34 rural, suburban, and urban districts; and

35 (f) Economic conditions within the district that limit the
36 ability of the district to finance the necessary classroom space from
37 local sources.

38 (5) Modernized spaces funded with this grant program in the prior
39 ten years are not eligible to receive state funding for modernization
40 through this grant program or the school construction assistance

1 program for the space that has been modernized with this grant
2 program. The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall
3 write rules to ensure new space added with funding provided by this
4 grant is included in the eligible inventory for the school
5 construction assistance program.

6 (6) The office of the superintendent of public instruction, in
7 consultation with the STEM education innovation alliance, must
8 prepare a plan for evaluating the student performance outcomes
9 resulting from the STEM facility grant program. The evaluation plan
10 and estimated cost must be submitted to the appropriate committees of
11 the legislature by January 1, 2016. The evaluation plan must provide
12 an initial evaluation report on student outcomes by January 1, 2023.
13 The report must also consider options for expanding the grant program
14 to improve specialized STEM facilities for middle and elementary
15 schools.

16 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.150
17 RCW to read as follows:

18 (1) The legislature recognizes that some school districts may
19 need additional financial assistance to provide classroom capacity to
20 support the phase-in of state-funded all-day kindergarten specified
21 in this chapter even though the school construction assistance
22 program under chapter 28A.525 RCW has included all-day kindergarten
23 in the calculation of necessary classroom space since 2001. The
24 legislature intends to assist school districts in the phase-in of
25 all-day kindergarten with the grant program described in this
26 section.

27 (2) The all-day kindergarten facility grant program must be
28 administered by the superintendent of public instruction in
29 consultation with an advisory committee. The advisory committee must
30 include three school district facility managers, one each from an
31 urban, suburban, and rural school district, selected by the
32 superintendent of public instruction, and four community members
33 selected by the governor representing parents and organizations
34 concerned with early education and student academic performance. The
35 superintendent of public instruction must develop grant application
36 materials in consultation with the advisory committee, must review
37 applications for accuracy and financial reasonableness, and must
38 administer awarded grants. The advisory committee must review
39 applications against the criteria specified in subsection (4) of this

1 section and recommend a single rank-ordered list. The superintendent
2 of public instruction may modify the rank-ordered list received by
3 the advisory committee for inclusion in the agency's capital budget
4 request, but must also submit to the governor and fiscal committees
5 of the legislature the original ranking by the advisory committee
6 with explanations for any changes made to the ranking. The governor
7 may use the original list prepared by the advisory committee or may
8 consider any changes recommended by the office of the superintendent
9 of public instruction in preparing the governor's capital budget
10 request.

11 (3) One hundred percent of project costs necessary to provide
12 additional classroom space at existing elementary schools are
13 eligible for kindergarten classroom grants under this program for:

14 (a) Facilities owned by public school districts or public charter
15 schools;

16 (b) Facilities built or modernized prior to 2003; and

17 (c) Project costs for design, construction, purchase, and
18 installation of modular buildings, project management, capitalized
19 equipment, and fixtures. Costs for purchase or lease of portables or
20 other facilities not installed on permanent foundations are not
21 eligible.

22 (4) The criteria listed in this subsection must be used to rank
23 grant requests. In applying these criteria, the advisory committee
24 should seek to recommend funding for projects that provide necessary
25 classroom space in districts furthest behind in implementing state-
26 funded all-day kindergarten, or for districts that have implemented
27 state-funded all-day kindergarten in temporary spaces, with the
28 highest enrollment percentages of students eligible for free and
29 reduced-price school lunches, in districts least able to provide the
30 necessary classroom space from local sources. The criteria are:

31 (a) The extent that implementing state-funded all-day
32 kindergarten may be assisted by additional classroom capacity as
33 verified by site visits by the office of the superintendent of public
34 instruction. School districts that have implemented state-funded all-
35 day kindergarten in temporary spaces must be ranked as high as
36 schools not having implemented state-funded all-day kindergarten due
37 to a lack of space. For the purposes of this subsection, temporary
38 spaces mean spaces that are not designed as a classroom nor typically
39 used as a classroom, such as the library, auditorium, gymnasium, or
40 in neighboring community facilities not owned by the district;

1 (b) The kindergarten classroom space is needed in schools with
2 the highest free and reduced-price school lunch enrollment
3 percentages; and

4 (c) Economic conditions within the district that limit the
5 ability of the district to finance the necessary classroom space from
6 local sources.

7 (5) The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall
8 write rules to ensure new space added with funding provided by this
9 grant is included in the eligible inventory for the school
10 construction assistance program. Grant funds provided under this
11 section must not be counted as local match for the school
12 construction assistance program. The all-day kindergarten program is
13 not intended to replace the school construction assistance program
14 for providing state assistance for the construction of new schools.

15 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** This act is necessary for the immediate
16 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of
17 the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes
18 effect immediately.

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